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MFA FINAL VISUAL PRESENTATION

by

ANDREW MICHAEL FRENCH

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF FINE ARTS

IN

SCULPTURE

DEPARTMENT OF ART AND DESIGN

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

FALL 1999



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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled:

Final Visual Presentation

submitted by ANDREW MICHAEL FRENCH in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Fine Art.

The University of Alberta

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I hereby release the following works for incorporation into the University Collections,
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TITLE

DATE

MEDIUM

SIZE

PILLAR

SEPT 99 STEEL

15' x 8 1/2 x 8

WANCE VALUE \$ 25,000

Allusions to Grandeur.

Slide # 1,2,3,4.	Over view of exhibition space.
Slide # 5.	Battleship 1999, Altar 1998, Pillar 1999.
Slide # 6.	Battleship 1999, Pillar 1998, Zoom 1998.
Slide # 7.	Battleship 1999, Shrine 1997.
Slide # 8.	Shrine 1997.
Slide # 9.	Pillar 1999, Still life 1999.
Slide # 10,11,12.	Pillar 1999.
Slide # 13.	Still life 1999, Pillar 1999, Olympia 1998.
Slide # 14.	Still life 1999, Altar 1998.
Slide # 15.	Altar 1998, Shrine 1997.
Slide # 16.	Olympia 1998, King 1998.
Slide # 17.	Interior of Olympia 1998.
Slide # 18.	Zoom 1998, Olympia 1998, King 1998.
Slide # 19.	Zoom 1998.
Slide # 20.	King 1998.

Two Years - New Sculpture is comprised of a pair of solo exhibitions by Ryan McCourt and Andrew French. These two exhibitions, chosen in a visual presentation for the degree of Master of Fine Arts at the University of Alberta's renovated sculpture program

Ryan McCourt earned his undergraduate degree in 1997 from the University of Alberta. There, he continued his studies under Professor Peter Hide, in the graduate program. His work results from continuing the tradition of constructed abstract sculpture within the intimate scale of interior design.

The Leverhulme Trust

Sponsors:



Andrew French graduated from The Kent Institute of Art and Design, England, in 1994. In 1997, he came to the University of Alberta on a Study Abroad Studentship from The Leverhulme Trust to begin his graduate studies. During the program, his process has evolved from using predrawn, carefully measured conceptions, to a more spontaneous approach, responding to found objects.

designed by Christine Schmitz

Andrew French Allusions to Grandeur

September 17 - 28, 1999



10:00 am - 5:00 pm
September 20 - 28
12:00 pm - 5:00 pm

Two Years New Sculpture

Ryan McCourt Modern Artifacts

September 17 - 28, 1999



September 14 - 26, 1999

at The Fine Arts Building Gallery
1-1 Fine Arts Building, University of Alberta
112 Street & 89 Avenue, Edmonton, AB T6G 2C9

Opening Reception:

Thursday, September 16 7:00 pm - 10:00 pm

Hours:

Tuesday - Friday 10:00 am - 5:00 pm
Sunday 2:00 pm - 5:00 pm

• closed Monday, Saturday and statutory holidays



Daydream, Ryan McCourt

Zoom, Andrew French



ANDREW FRENCH
September 17 - 28, 1999

at The Arts Barns
10330 - 84 Avenue, Edmonton, AB

Opening Reception:

Friday, September 17 7:00 pm - 2:00 am

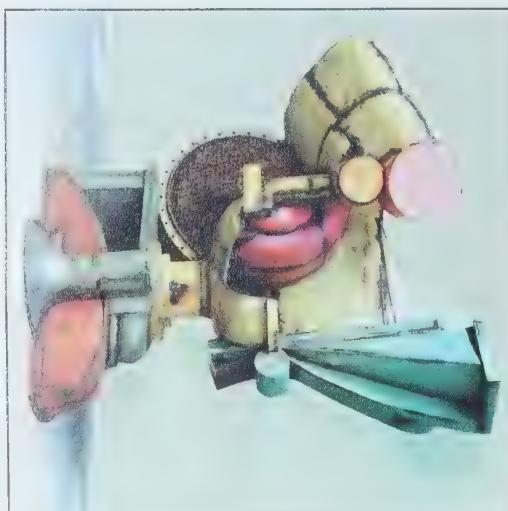
Hours:

September 18 & 19 10:00 am - 5:00 pm
September 20 - 28 12:00 pm - 5:00 pm



Night Music, Ryan McCourt

Still Life, Andrew French



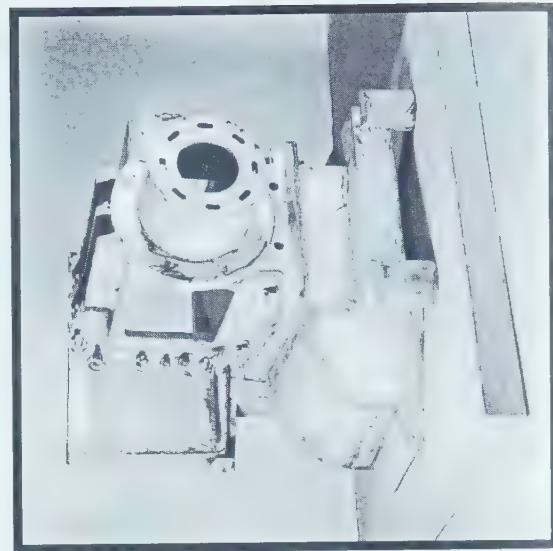
Andrew French

Allusions to Grandeur

This exhibition is the final visual presentation for the degree of Master of Fine Arts in Sculpture

September 17 - 28, 1999

Public Viewing Dates



The Arts Barns

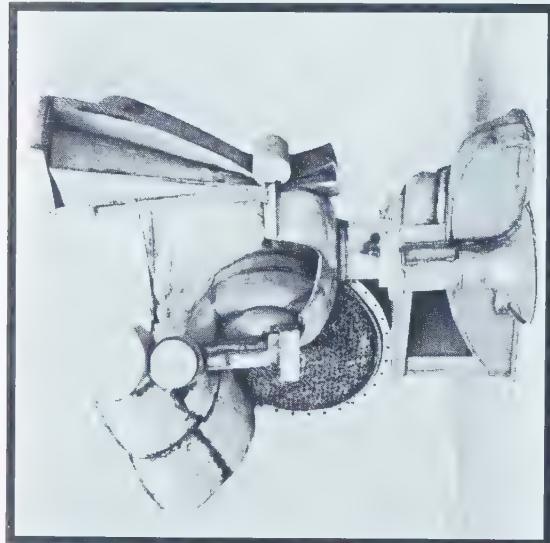
10330 - 84 Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta

Viewing Hours:

September 18 & 19
10:00 am - 5:00 pm
September 20 - 28
12:00 pm - 5:00 pm

Opening Reception:

**Friday,
September 17
7:00 pm - 2:00 am**



Special thanks to:

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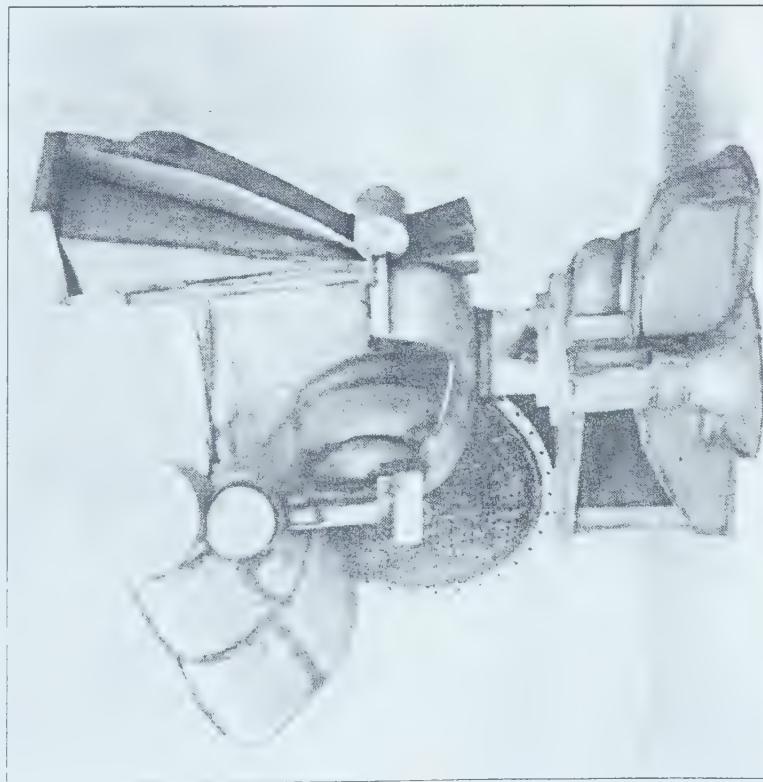


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the visual arts

• Galleries This Week •



Still Life, one of the sculptures in an exhibition of work by MFA sculpture candidate Andrew French.

The exhibition is the final visual presentation for the degree of Master of Fine Arts in Sculpture.
When: Opening reception today, 7 p.m.-2 a.m.
Runs until Sept. 28.
Where: Arts Barns, 10330 84th Ave.

File photo

Info: 465-6171.

Local sculptor has allusions to grandeur

Andrew French-Allusions to Grandeur

Arts Barns
17-28 September

Mark Wells

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT STAFF

Andrew French's presentation for the Master of Fine Arts degree in sculpture is an incredible and delightfully humbling exhibit of steel sculpture.

Scale and proportion are uniting themes behind Allusions. The viewer is confronted with scale and intense colour immediately on entering the space, courtesy of the sculpture, Shrine.

French's earliest work completed at the university, Shrine, was planned and constructed in 1/12 scale before the final product was attempted. A gold-painted structure evoking the Parthenon floats inside of the red skeleton of a traditional house. Shrine employs the golden rectangle/golden ratio in its proportions. The golden ratio is used in the skeleton of the house to point out that although this common architectural assembly of rectangles and triangles today refers to a 'house,' "there isn't much reason it should be seen that way." The golden ratio, approximately equivalent to 1.618, is found in the growth pattern of trees, average proportions of human and animal bodies, and ancient Greek architecture. The Greeks associated the ratio with divinity.

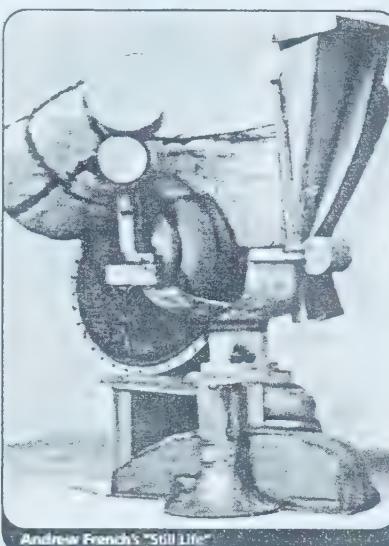
Another sculpture, Pillar, stands 15 feet high, is 8 feet square at the pedestal, and weighs approximately 8000 pounds. This final piece again alludes to ancient Greek architecture, but the focus is on scale. "I wanted the scale to feel industrial, to be outside of our common scale. The whole idea is of making the structure comfortable with itself, make it feel right and in proportion." The behemoth, Pillar, is at once disconcerting and at ease with itself. Large cut-outs from its symmetrical form balance as the viewer circles the piece. It gives a sense of surety, accomplishment, grandeur and completion.

Ironically, the future of Allusions to Grandeur is in limbo. While Andrew French is hopeful that the pieces may be sold, he admits that many will likely end up "disposed of." In the meantime he can be assured that his work is a success and leave a lasting impression on those who see it.

Scrap metal or sculpture?



Ryan McCourt's "Night Music"



Andrew French's "Still Life"

In hands of French and McCourt, it's all art

By DANIELLE ZYP

There's an oft-posed question about the abstract metal sculptures that U of A fine arts students have been producing for nigh on 30 years: "What's the difference between this sculpture and what already lies in the scrap-metal yard?"

Graduate students Ryan McCourt and Andrew French address that attitude head-on. "It's a slow process to understand someone's Master's thesis," says French. "If you were to open a written thesis by a physical engineer, you might need to look up a few words in the dictionary and read it slowly."

"It's not like flipping open the comics in the paper," adds McCourt. "People need to take the time to stand and look at it," concludes French.

French's thesis is the culmination of two years' worth of daily work. Weighing in at well over one tonne and standing five metres high, *Column or Pillar* (he hasn't decided on the name yet) is a statement about the artist's commitment to solid foundations and hard work, as well as an expression of reverence toward an ancient yet enduring architectural symbol.

Narcotic art

It stands in sharp contrast to the more intimately scaled work of McCourt. His smallest piece, *in the Deep*, is the product of

kind of artistic frenzy that doesn't occur every day. Late one night, juiced up by the constant charge of creativity and euphoria from lack of sleep (a condition he likens to nitrogen narcosis, which deep-sea divers experience), McCourt and another student welded together this sculpture in a one-hour surge of energy. With each element fitting precisely and elegantly together, the piece seemed to appear like magic.

Although both men were heavily influenced by Professor Peter Hide, McCourt and French followed divergent paths in their approach to sculpture. McCourt, who studied at the U of A as an undergraduate, departed from the spontaneous, hands-on method of creation the school encouraged and began to plan out his creations in advance. His beautifully appointed sculptures, often based on musical instruments, sing his intentions: "I want my sculpture to be approachable and people-oriented."

Pardon my French

French, by contrast, graduated from the Kent Institute of Art and Design in England and slowly moved away from the linear, symmetrical, plotted-out designs he used to create, and began making most of his decisions on the spot as the project grew, responding on the fly to materials, textures and colour. "I'm not a planner," he says. "I start with a basic idea, and then I'm just winging it, trying to make it work." He's not alone. McCourt says, "I often add colour when I'm finished and then completely change my mind."

tion, texture, value, scale, concepts and the process of creation—that is only part of what an artist does. Add the level of hard work and pure energy that goes into these metal constructions, and there's no question that the finished product amounts to much more than scrap metal. ☐

Modern Artifacts by Ryan McCourt •
FAB Gallery, University of Alberta •
Sept. 14-26 • *Allusions to Grandeur* •
by Andrew French • Arts Barns •
Sept. 17-28

visual arts
profile

making is visual thing. If someone doesn't think it's a piano—that's okay. I just want them to enjoy it."

"It's not as simple as writing down a shopping list," said French. "Sometimes I'll be in the middle of a sculpture and think I

was much more spontaneous than usual."

Several of his works portray different types of "human" containers such as a cage, altar and an actual bathtub. "I was interested in the way it cradles the person," he said.

He does have a favorite piece: a 3,600-kilogram earthy structure called "Pillar" for its resemblance to a Greek column.

"It's the most resolved of my work," he said. "So many of the other pieces I consider a stepping stone."

French will take his new-found knowledge home to England when he returns in just about a month. Three years after graduating from the Kent Institute of Art and Design in England in 1994, he arrived in Alberta on a Study Abroad Studentship.

Since he can't take his massive sculptures back to England, he hopes they'll find homes in Edmonton.

"Perhaps one will be displayed on the university campus. If the others aren't sold, they will be put in storage or discarded," he said. "But I'm pleased in the way things have developed."

And to think it all started with some heavy metal. ■

Portraits by Tina Chang



Enjoying one of his sculptures: McCourt.

French in one of his "human" cages.



Zoom, 1998, Andrew French

King, 1998,
Andrew French

Revival, 1999,
Ryan McCourt

folio
back
Dodge

Heavy Metal



Honky Tonk, 1999, Ryan McCourt



Easy Street, 1999, Ryan McCourt

By Phoebe Dey

To say Ryan McCourt and Andrew French are into heavy metal would not be an exaggeration.

The pair recently finished graduate studies in the university's fine arts program. Both sculptors work mainly with steel and create the type of pieces that just won't fit into a briefcase. But that's where the similarities end.

Most of McCourt's sculptures take on a weathered, bronze tone with refined lines and curves. His detail and craftsmanship often give the pieces a soft look, and it can be surprising to learn they are made out of steel.

They range in size from hand-held abstract works to 675-kilogram paradigms of musical instruments and furniture. "Some don't refer to anything other than what your imagination brings to it," said McCourt. "My only philosophy is that I subscribe to the idea it's what's important and that's what you are."

McCourt said naming a favorite piece is like asking a mother to name her favorite child.

When McCourt was in his second year of anthropology, he took a fine arts class just to fill his timetable. Now he hopes to make a living at it.

McCourt said naming a favorite piece is like asking a mother to name her favorite child. But spectators picked a clear-cut winner at the opening reception. "Pine," the only piece of the collection sold so far, drew rave reviews from viewers, said McCourt.

People were lumbering on the sleek, contemporary, ash-colored chaise-lounge and caressed its smooth surface.

How McCourt comes up with his pieces remains a mystery to him. "Part of me is deciding I want to make a thing look like a throne or a piano, and part is finding a great piece of material in the scrap yard and going from there," he said.

French echoes those



*Pillar, 1999,
Andrew French*

would like a part to go in that area so I'll look for something specific but will stumble upon something entirely different."

French describes his pieces as "more industrial and slightly bolder" than McCourt's, works which are "more intimate" than his own. French's pieces mark a transition through his learning process, whereas it is difficult to detect an emotional shift in McCourt's sculptures.

An abstract, colorful piece, "Still Life," is one of French's latest works.

"It grew quickly and boisterously," he said. "As I went along I got more involved with the intimacy of it. When I look at it, it actually surprises me, and I find it hard to believe I made it. It's al-

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APO BREAKFAST

The APO Learning Implementation Committee is pleased to offer the "Managing Your Career" presentation at the U of A 'Come for Breakfast' meeting on Oct. 14, 1999 from 8:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m. in the Heritage Lounge, Athabasca Hall. The topic will be: What's happening on the APO learning and development front? This is a great way to meet other APOs and reflect on your own career. For more information, please contact: Lynn Burnett-murphy@ualberta.ca, 6488 or Lynn.burnett-murphy@ualberta.ca.

president (academic) and includes faculty members.

Application deadlines are Nov. 1, March 1 and July 1. Guidelines and application details are available from International Relations (2-10 University Hall) or the International Centre (172 HUB International), sidewalk level, door 9101. Contact Barry Tonge (barry.tonge@ualberta.ca) for information.

TECHNOLOGY FOR SUCCESS '99:

SYMPOSIUM & TRADE FAIR

The high-tech event for all businesses, Technology for Success is the primary annual event that brings together key players in the advanced technology sectors with business leaders in pursuit of cutting-edge technologies and strategies that can improve market performance. This year's focus on information technology and its profitable application in all industries is expected to top last year's attendance, which attracted more than 400 participants and 80 exhibitors from:

- small companies using and producing technology;
- large consumers and producers of technology; and
- support organizations and industries.

Technology for Success '99 takes place at the Shaw Conference Centre, Thursday, November 18. For more information, contact: Currie & Gerrard Communications, (780) 413-9570, fax: (780) 486-0285, e-mail: info@technologyforsuccess.com, or view: www.technologyforsuccess.com.

WORLD WIDE WEB

The World Wide Web Steering Committee is seeking persons interested in participating to submit their names as ad hoc members. The committee's major activities include strategic planning for the university's web presence. Applicants should contact Brad Hestbak in the Office of Public Affairs at 492-5663 or brad.hestbak@ualberta.ca for more information.

LAUNCHING THE INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES FUND

University of Alberta faculty are invited to submit applications to receive funds in support of international activities with U of A partner institutions. Priority will be given to applications with matched funding, and grants will not normally exceed \$2,000. The fund committee is chaired by the associate vice-

Keynote Speaker:

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Head, School of Health Professions & Rehabilitation Sciences
University of Southampton, UK

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4:00 pm

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